

# Reporter

## ST. CHARLES COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

### NRCS Welcomes Intern

Tesa Madsen-McQueen is spending her summer break from college interning with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Tesa is a junior at Missouri State University majoring in Environmental Plant Science.



Growing up in the Springfield, Mo., area, Tesa's love for the outdoors was nurtured by exploring the natural beauty of the Ozark Highlands. Her exposure to agriculture has been recent with her involvement working on an urban farm through the Springfield Urban Agriculture Coalition. She is passionate about sustainable agriculture and is looking forward to learning how to implement conservation practices for land stewardship on private lands.

Tesa's hobbies include camping, hiking, biking and kayaking; and she is enjoying the time she can spend exploring what nature has to offer in the Greater St. Louis Area.

Tesa will receive training in NRCS programs under the supervision of Renee Cook, DC., and will complete her internship in August.



### Bryant Placed at Union

Kervin Bryant, NRCS Soil Conservationist, has accepted a permanent position with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in the Franklin County USDA Service Center in Union, Mo. He will continue to work with agricultural landowners, assisting them with conservation plans on their farms.

Kervin has spent the last year in the St. Peters office, completing a training regiment that included reviewing plans, conducting spot checks, meeting with farmers, and inputting computer data related to the individual farm plans. He will continue this work in Franklin County.



### Soil to Spoon: Kids' Posters Illustrate Connection to the Farm

Remember the warm summer days when you were a kid. After the chores were done, and the sun had warmed the house to the point where staying indoors had become uncomfortable, and there was no television or at least no day-time programming that interested a youngster.....we headed outside. Outside to climb trees, build forts, make mud pies. Our backyard playgrounds were complete with sandboxes and rope swings, and an endless supply of natural building materials to construct our dream castles, pirate ships, teepees, space shuttles or whatever we could imagine.

Fast-forward to today. Our modern youngsters can download movies, songs and games onto their laptops, join other kids across the globe playing online war games and while away the hours tapping keys and viewing screens. We send them outside to play and their only concern is how far from the house can they access the WiFi.

There's no doubt that times have changed. A multitude of studies have been done and books written on our children's disconnect with nature. The No Child Left Inside initiative which became popular in 2005 has prompted many wonderful ideas and programs to reconnect children to the natural world. Everything from environmental courses added to curriculums, outdoor classrooms, summer camps where electronics are banned, and nature explore playgrounds in county parks (pictured below): all meant to get our kids outside.

So when the SWCD visits a classroom and asks the students, "Where does your food come from?", it's no surprise



**The brand new Nature Explore playground at Towne Park, a new St. Charles County Park, north of Flint Hill on Highway 40/61. The playground uses natural materials to encourage kids to get their hands dirty and use their imaginations. There are building areas, a sandbox, a bicycle-powered water pump, a musical instrument station and more.**



**Lucy Weston, Grand Prize poster contest winner**

that the first answer from many youngsters is "the grocery store" or "the kitchen". We easily get them to move a little further back along the food processing chain and discover that they do know that their food comes from farms, but the work that goes into growing, transporting, processing, packaging and selling their food is mostly lost to them. It is a fun and eye-opening experience to help the students trace all their food items back to the nutrient-rich source: the soil. Everything from the pepperoni on their pizza to the grains that make up their Frosted Flakes, we find that healthy soil is the source. With a few simple demonstrations, we illustrate the scarcity of good, productive soil and the importance of protecting that valuable resource and keeping it in place on the land where it's needed to grow food.

This was the underlying theme of this year's National Association of Conservation District's Poster Contest: Soil to Spoon! Students were asked to use words and pictures to show how the foods that enrich their lives and promote their health make it to their spoons.

Eighty-six St. Charles County youth participated in the contest and the grand prize winner, Lucy Weston, is pictured above with her illustration. Lucy, a fourth-grader at All Saints Catholic School in St. Peters, received \$75 dollars and her poster will be entered in the state contest. All of the children received small prizes for their entries. Other cash winners are pictured on page 3.

### Clean Water Commission & Corps of Engineers Reviewing Public Input on Issue that Would Dump Soil into Missouri River

Five years ago, a decision by DNR's Clean Water Commission put the brakes on a construction project initiated by the Corps of Engineers and U.S. Fish and Wildlife. The project, designed to create shallow water habitat for wildlife, particularly the endangered pallid sturgeon, would also include the dumping of phosphorous rich soil into the river at several places in the state. The Clean Water Commission's action was not aimed at stopping the project, but objected to the dumping of nutrient-rich soil into the river, with the potential of adding to the already disastrous effects of sedimentation in the river and the receiving Gulf waters: an area often referred to as "the Dead Zone" because of the destruction of aquatic life in the gulf.

Recently, the Corps petitioned the Clean Water Commission to rescind the order and allow the project to continue. The project calls for the Corps to run a dredge through river-bottom soil and then deposit the soil into the main channel of the river. This action would create the shallow water habitat in the dredge that the pallid sturgeon requires. However, this practice also is in direct conflict with the mission of certain agencies, including the Soil and Water Conservation Districts in the state. SWCDs and the farmers who participate in the state cost-share programs have spent

decades developing and installing practices that keep sediment out of the waterways. The idea is to keep nutrient-rich soil in place on the land, and protect aquatic life from the harmful effects of sediment and the pollutants that adhere to soil particles. Locally, the SWCD, NRCS and local government entities have been quite successful in implementing cost-share programs and urban initiatives that protect the river from the harmful effects of both agricultural and urban pollution. Construction of waterways, terraces, diversions, bioswales, detention ponds, rain gardens....all in an effort to save soil and protect surface water and aquatic life.

Missouri farmers are generally not opposed to creating wildlife habitat. In fact, many St. Charles County farmers enroll each year in programs to increase habitat opportunities for wildlife. The issue causing opposition is the dumping of soil into the river. While the Corps has produced studies showing that any harm from sedimentation would be short-term, local agriculture-related associations (including Missouri Farmers Care and the Corn and Soybean Growers) have the opinion that the Corps' plan to dump soil into the river is a practice for which farmers will end up taking the blame. When discussions are held about the "Dead Zone" in the gulf, many fingers are pointed at

**See SOIL, pg. 3**

## Local teams place 5th and 6th at Missouri Envirothon

The St. Louis Region sent three teams to the Missouri State Envirothon this year, and two of those teams scored within the top six places at the event. Parkway North High School (below, left) earned fifth place out of 21 teams, and Fort Zumwalt North’s team (below, right) placed sixth in their very first visit to a state-wide Envirothon competition.

The Envirothon is a hands-on natural resources-based problem solving competition for high school students. Seven regional events are held throughout the state, and winners at those events compete at the state level to determine which team will represent Missouri at the International Envirothon, which includes teams from across the U.S. and Canada.

Missouri will be represented by Pembroke High School from the Kansas City area at the Canon International Envirothon to be held at the end of July in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Below, at center, three young men consult on a soil sample at the Soils and Land Use Station during the Missouri State Envirothon, held this year at the Bradford Research Station near Columbia, Mo.



## Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

*Editorial Note: The following article is from the DNR website. St. Charles County is not included in the counties currently eligible for cost-share through the MRBI project.*

In the summer of 2010, the Department of Natural Resources’ Soil and Water Conservation Program coordinated development of Missouri project proposals for the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative, or MRBI. The proposals from Missouri soil and water conservation districts resulted in 12 Missouri projects being awarded \$6 million in 2010 and \$28.3 million in funding over the next four years.

The MRBI is a 12-state effort funded by the USDA to address nutrient loading in the Mississippi River Basin from its source in Minnesota to its mouth in the Gulf of Mexico. Agricultural runoff containing fertilizer and other nutrients produces nuisance algal blooms in surface water that impair recreational uses, cause fish kills, and require extra treatment of local drinking water supplies. Ultimately, the runoff also contributes to a lack of oxygen downstream in the so-called "dead zone" near where the Mississippi River empties into the Gulf of Mexico. This area is the second-largest dead zone in the world.

The federal funds from USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service will be used along with state, local, and private funds to provide cost-share payments to help agricultural producers install conservation practices that reduce nutrient and sediment runoff from agricultural land.

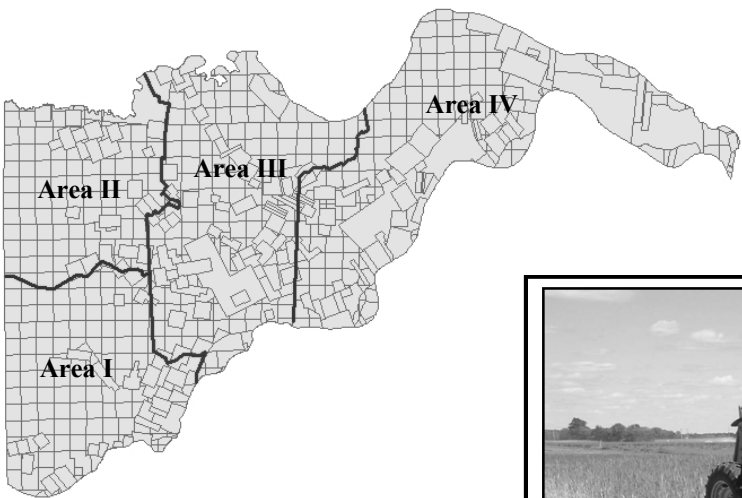
The Soil and Water Conservation Program helped the districts develop their MRBI project proposals and provided \$500,000 in state nonfederal match to leverage the federal MRBI funds. For each district interested in applying, SWCP developed a project proposal template populated with information such as water quality data, impaired waters, TMDLs, historical cost-share payments made to producers in each county, existing watershed groups, and watershed management plans. The state’s funding will primarily help pay for a portion of the cost of edge-of-field and in-stream monitoring to measure the effectiveness of each project to reduce nutrient and sediment runoff.

Current projects are centered around the bootheel area of the state; and north-central Missouri, including the Mark Twain Lake area, Salt River and Medicine and Locust Creeks near the Iowa border.

## Supervisor Elections to be Held this Year

The St. Charles County Soil and Water Conservation District will hold a supervisor election in Areas I and III, November 15, 2012. Currently Paul Kamphoefner is the supervisor in Area I and Don Johnson is the supervisor in Area III. The election will be held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting held at the University of Missouri Extension office in St. Peters.

Anyone interested in being a candidate should contact the SWCD office at 636-922-2833, ext. 3. To qualify, a person must be a land representative, reside in or own a farm in the area from which you are nominated, be actively engaged in farming and practice conservation activities related to agriculture, and be a tax-paying citizen of St. Charles County for at least two years.



**The map above shows the Areas of the county for purposes of the Soil and Water District. Each area has one agricultural landowner on the Board of Supervisors for the SWCD. This year’s elections are for Areas I and III.**

## Mark These Dates



## 18th Annual Women in Agriculture Conference

The 18th Annual Women in Agriculture Conference will be held September 10-12, 2012 in Chillicothe, Mo., at the Days Inn.

Among activities planned are a visit to the Litton Agri-Science Learning Center & Amish Community of Jamesport. Workshop topics include Organic Cheese, Francine’s Bakery, Soil Health, Cover Crops, Fabric to Fiber and Internet Safety. Monday’s Banquet theme is “Viva Las Vegas”, and the ladies are invited to “dress in party clothes and bring \$10 in quarters for the Bling Fling”.

Registration is \$65 and is due by August 1. Checks should be made payable to Missouri State Women in Ag, and can be mailed to Wendy Bowen, 23 West Main Street, Kingston, Mo. 64650.

## Grazing Schools

Missouri Regional Grazing Schools are designed to provide education on grazing management for producers and agency professionals, and are taught by NRCS and University of Missouri Extension personnel. Producers wishing to qualify for a DSP3 cost-share program must attend a grazing school.

Curriculum topics include plant growth, forage quality, livestock nutrition, soil fertility, fencing, watering, layout and design, and economics.

The next area grazing school will be held in Franklin County: Sept. 12 & 13 in Union, Mo. For more information, or to register, contact Lori Nowak at 636-583-2303, ext. 3. For additional grazing school dates and locations, visit the website at <http://agebb.missouri.edu/mfgc/>

## Grazing Schools Cover Important Topics

Dividing pastures will help optimize pasture utilization and allow rested pastures to regrow. Livestock can be rotated to fresh pastures when the forage is ready.

Fence and water systems are often the challenge to implementing a rotational grazing system. The St. Charles County SWCD and NRCS have programs available to assist farmers in implementing grazing systems by assisting with the cost of fence, watering systems, improved pasture fertility and diversified forage species.

Grazing Schools are offered throughout the state and cover these topics: economics, nutrient cycling, forages, animals, soil sampling, grazer’s arithmetic, grazing plans, fencing, watering, weed control, and more.

Contact the District office at 636-922-2833, ext. 3 for additional information.



**Shawn Keller, NRCS Resource Conservationist, recently attended a workshop where she was able to observe a crimper-roller (above) being used to kill a cover crop while planting corn in the same pass. It can be used as an alternative to using chemical burn down before planting.**

## Clean Stream 2012



A date change due to rain reduced the number of participants for the 2012 Clean Stream event, with about 400 volunteers gathering on April 28 to clean-up sites in St. Charles, Lake St. Louis, O’Fallon and Wentzville. An estimated 5,000 pounds of trash was collected. This father/daughter team took pride in their work, cleaning up an area behind the Dierberg’s store in Wentzville.

**SOIL**, from pg. 1 the agricultural community, citing runoff from agricultural fields as the culprit responsible for excessive nutrients and sedimentation that kills aquatic life.

This controversial issue has been around for several years, but urgency to address the Missouri state’s portion of the project has increased because the Corps now wants the Clean Water Commission to remove the stop order so work can continue at Jameson Island near Arrow Rock, Mo.

A public hearing on June 11 will have passed by the publication of this issue of the Reporter, but concerned farmers can still have their voices heard by sending a letter to the Commission and the Corps before June 30. Alternative construction plans have been proposed, and local farm groups are supporting what is known as “Alternative 3”. This plan will allow the dredging, but requires the nutrient-rich soil to be dumped on land, not in the river.

The Corps is recommending “Alternative 4” which would allow 30 acres of soil from the Jameson project to be dumped in the river. The entire project across the state would allow approximately 98,000 acres of bottomland soil to be dumped in the river.

Details for both of these alternatives can be found in a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers document at <http://www.nwk.usace.army.mil/regulatory/CurrentPN/JamesonIslandProjectReport.pdf> or type **“Missouri River Recovery Program Project Implementation Report”** into your web search bar.

The Missouri Farmers Care website, <http://mofarmerscare.com>, has information about sending a letter and requesting “Alternative 3”.

Readers who wish to send an opinion to DNR are encouraged to send a letter before June 30 to

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
PO Box 176  
Jefferson City, Mo. 65102  
Or by email: [cleanwater@dnr.mo.gov](mailto:cleanwater@dnr.mo.gov)

*The Reporter has attempted to provide information while not endorsing or publically supporting either side of this discussion. Readers are encouraged to seek more information from the Corps of Engineers, the Clean Water Commission and agricultural groups of their choice.*

## Conservation Practice Maintenance

The St. Charles County Soil & Water District recently completed annual spot checks of conservation practices. Landowners working to maintain these practices can keep some of the following things in mind:

Mowing dams and waterways one or two times per year is a good practice. Other forms of controlling woody vegetation should be employed if mowing is not feasible.

Minor rills in grassed waterways can grow into big problems quickly. Fill small rills and seed cool season grasses in August and September for best recovery results.

Severely eroded sites often require heavy grading, which often eliminates organic matter. Adding manure, rotten hay or other organic matter may help the soils revive in time for planting. Seeding problem areas will also assist with re-vegetation. Annual fertilization is needed until grass is well established.

Nuisance animals such as groundhogs and muskrats should be controlled. Damage from a burrowing animal can completely destroy a dam in just a few years.

University of Missouri Extension offers several publications that provide maintenance information. These can be accessed online at <http://extension.missouri.edu>, or in person at 160 Brown Road in St. Peters. Request publications G1501, G1503, G1504 and G1548.

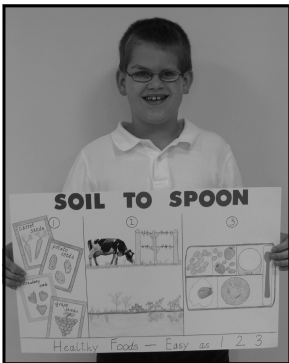
If you have questions about maintaining your conservation practice, contact Charlie Perkins, SWCD technician, at 636-922-2833, ext. 3.

## Lime Handler’s List to be Developed

If you are in the business of commercially producing, hauling or spreading bulk agricultural lime, please contact the District so you can be added to a Lime Handler’s List. State cost-share rates are based on bulk agricultural lime, and require an effective neutralizing material rating. Contact the District at 636-922-2833, ext. 3.

## 2012 Poster Contest Winners “Soil to Spoon”

### Fourth Grade

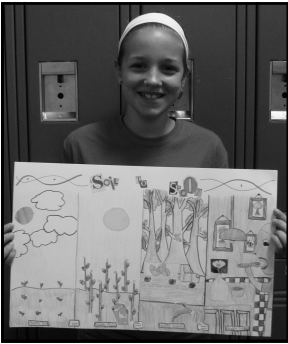


**Clockwise from top, left**  
First Place: Eric Meyer,  
St. Charles Borromeo;  
Second Place:  
Emily Bank, All Saints;  
Third Place:  
Trevor Wilson,  
St. Charles Borromeo.

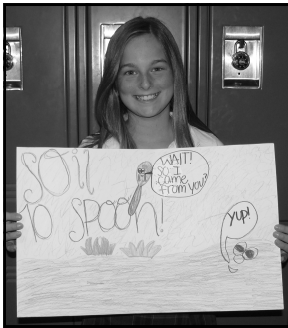
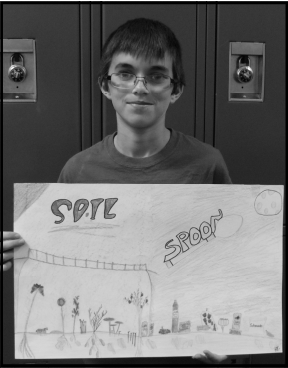
### Fifth Grade



**Clockwise from above:**  
First Place:  
Maddie Mrazik;  
Third Place:  
Morgan Bolk;  
Second Place:  
Leah Dwyer,  
all from All Saints  
School.



### Sixth Grade



**Clockwise from top, left**  
First Place:  
Olivia Vitale;  
Second Place:  
Parker Brunnworth;  
Third Place:  
Meghan Schneider,  
all from All Saints



# Reporter

ST. CHARLES COUNTY

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

160 St. Peters Centre Boulevard  
St. Peters, MO 63376-1695

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## SWCD Staff Speak to Nearly 800 students, teachers, and other citizens in 3 Month Period

Since March 1, the St. Charles County SWCD has met with and made presentations to nearly 800 people in the county with topics including soil health, soil biological communities, the importance of soil, water quality, painting with soil, soil profiles and horizons, and much more. The district is invited to many events in the spring, and several schools request presentations near the end of the school year. Among this year's events and visits were: the Lindenwood University Educator's Resource Fair, General Motor's Earth Day, County-wide Clean Stream, Immanuel Lutheran School's Rain Garden Planting, the annual Poster Contest, Daniel Boone Elementary Second Grade Soils Education, and Wentzville School District Eighth Grade Ecology Day.



Theresa Dunlap, SWCD Information/Education, assists Wentzville eighth graders in a search for soil animal life in soil samples taken at Quail Ridge County Park (above); a student at Immanuel Lutheran settles a plant into the ground in the school's new rain garden (right); Charlie Perkins, SWCD soil technician, shares information with Wentzville eighth graders about wetlands and a soil pit (far right); and two young soil painters smile for the camera during General Motor's Earth Day event (below, right).



St. Charles County  
Soil & Water Conservation District  
160 St. Peters Centre Boulevard  
St. Peters, MO 63376-1695  
636-922-2833, ext. 3

#### Board of Supervisors

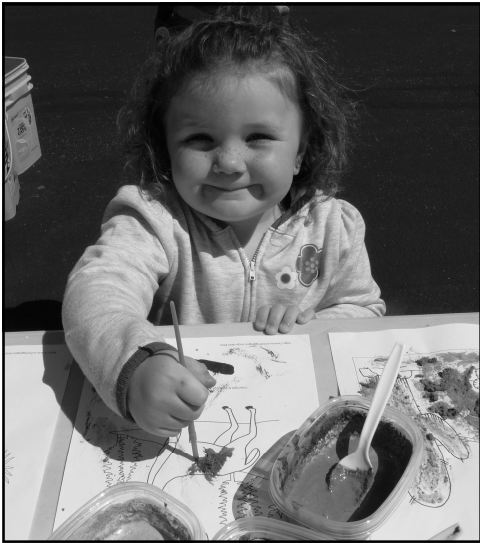
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Scott Killpack, Secretary • Paul Kamphoefner, Treasurer  
Alan Poggemoeller, Board Member

#### District Personnel

Frankie Coleman, District Manager  
Charlie Perkins, District Technician  
Theresa Dunlap, Info-Ed Specialist

#### NRCS Personnel

Renee Cook, District Conservationist  
Shawn Keller, Soil Conservationist  
Curtis Hoeft, Soil Conservationist  
Kervin Bryant, Soil Conservationist  
Deb Frazier, ACES



The mission of the Soil & Water Conservation District is to conserve the soil and water resources of the county; promote the wise use of these resources through education; protect residents from undue hardship caused by erosion, sedimentation and flooding; protect the agricultural soil base to ensure continued productivity; and preserve the quality of water and water courses within the county.